

To the Honorable Commissioners of the FCC,

I write to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's Broadcast Media Ownership Rules. These rules are; The National Television Ownership Rule, The Dual Network Rule, The Duopoly Rule for Radio, The Local Television Ownership Rule, The Television-Radio Cross-Ownership Rule, and The Broadcast-Newspaper Cross Ownership Ban. I support the retention of these FCC rules. These rules preserve competition, diversity, localism, and creativity in the broadcast marketplace.

The Creative Community is made up of tens of thousands of writers, directors, producers, performers, and others. We are individuals, small businesses, creative entrepreneurs, and just plain talented people who create the programming that large media corporations distribute to the American public over the airwaves, on cable, via DBS, or by other means of transmission.

Our ability to create and compete has already been substantially harmed by the media concentration that has taken place over the past decade. Further media consolidation, unleashed by the FCC's relaxation or elimination of these ownership rules, would concentrate the creation and distribution of programming in even fewer hands -- and those hands are not creative. The result will be a quickening of the trend toward homogenized, corporate programming squarely aimed at an ever narrowing, but allegedly preferable, demographic slice of the American public.

The Supreme Court, Congress, and the FCC itself have all long recognized that a multiplicity of diverse voices in the media is a vital public interest that safeguards American culture and democracy. Those protected voices are not only diverse political voices, they are diverse creative voices. For, at heart, it is all speech. And, at heart, the decision to allow the elimination of creative speech by lifting these ownership limits is a political choice. Both political and creative speech must be respected and promoted, not merged and consolidated out of existence. Surely, that is not in the public interest.

As member of the Creative Community, all I want is a chance to do my best work. That is immensely difficult in the already excessively concentrated distribution marketplace. Rather, we must all dance to the tune called by one of the handful of media leviathans. That does not result in "best work." The public has a strong interest in having independently produced programming with independent points of view in its range of programming choices. The lifting of these ownership limits would make that nearly impossible.

I urge you to promote a regulatory environment where members of the Creative Community can have a real chance to legitimately compete in America's "marketplace of ideas." Only by safeguarding that "competition of creativity" can the FCC fulfill its statutory obligation to provide the public with true diversity of viewpoints, sources, outlets, and programming content. American culture and democracy require nothing less.

I urge you to rule in the public interest on this matter and preserve the ability of the Creative Community to engage in healthy creative competition.

Give us a chance to show what we can do.

Edwin Torres
Taxpayer with a vote